

Henry Sanders was an old hound dog. Henry had lived with the Sanders family for a long time. They found him on their doorstep when he was a puppy. He had a happy life at the Sanders' house. He did not have much to do. He was a lazy dog. He was not a hunting dog. He did not have to hunt with Mr. Sanders or his sons. He was not a fluffy dog like a poodle. He did not have to ride in the car with Mrs. Sanders, and he did not have to go on walks with her. Henry was happy being just a family dog.

Henry liked to sleep under the big cherry bush. It was at the far corner of the house. He liked to sleep there in the summer because it was nice and cool. He slept there in the morning, then ate lunch, and then napped for the rest of the day.

Henry did not like the summertime. He did not like the hot breezes and he did not like the fleas. Every summer fleas jumped on Henry. They bit him on the legs and he had to scratch and scratch.

One morning Henry was taking a nap. He was dreaming and he heard a voice. It said to be careful, that a cat was near. Then Henry heard the voice again. It said, "Wake up! A cat is near!" Henry woke up with a start just in time to see a cat jump on his tail. Henry barked as loudly as he could and the cat ran up a tree.

Then Henry said, "Who is talking to me? Is there someone in the bushes?"

"No, I am not in the bushes. I am in your ear. My name is Ralph and I am a flea."

Henry told the flea thank you for warning him about the cat. Then he asked Ralph how long he would be in his ear. "I do not know," said Ralph.

"I know you do not like fleas," said Ralph. "I promise I will take care of you while you nap. I will not jump around and I will not bite you. Please let me stay. I will be your friend."

"Very well," said Henry. "I think it sounds like a good deal. I want to be your friend!"

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